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ABSTRACT

A look at the figures in a recent report, "The State of Learning," reveals that for the students in New York City, who are almost one third of all those in the State's public schools system, the state of learning is deplorable. The children who are most at risk receive fewer resources than their more advantaged peers. Minorities constitute 82 percent of the City's public-school enrollment, and the City has by far the greatest concentration of poor children and students with language deficiencies. In addition, 11.1 percent of the City's students are in special education. New York City spent substantially less per pupil than comparably-sized districts in the downstate area and received less state aid per pupil than the state average. The City had the largest number of uncertified teachers, the greatest percentage of inexperienced teachers, and fewer teachers and staff per pupil than other state districts. Almost uniformly, the City's schools had the lowest levels of performance on state-administered tests. While the report reiterates the state's commitment to the principles that every child can learn and that every child is entitled to the resources necessary to provide opportunity, the current inequities must be addressed in order to focus on the children's needs. Six tables provide supporting data. (SLD)

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The State of Learning

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The State of Learning

New York: the State of Learning.[1] That is the title of the most recent report to the Governor and the Legislature on the educational status of public and private schools in New York state. Dated February, 1994, it is the sixth annual accounting submitted by the State Education under Section 655 of the State Education Law.

> A look at the figures reveals that for the children in New York City almost a third of all those in the state's public school system – the state of learning is, indeed, deplorable. In the words of the report, " those children who are most at risk of school failure receive fewer resources than their more advantaged peers."[2]

Who are these children at risk?

- Minorities constituted 82 percent of New York City's public school enrollment, compared to 17.3 percent of public school enrollment elsewhere. In New York City 77.8 percent of minority students attended schools with relatively few non minority students.[3]

- New York City had by far the greatest concentration of poor children by both poverty measures used in the report.[4] 67 percent of the state's students attending public schools with concentrated poverty attended school in New York City.[5]

- Pupils with language deficiencies (LEP pupils) were concentrated in New York City, where public and non-public schools enrolled 79 percent of all identified LEP pupils in the state.[6]

- The majority (91 percent) of the 159,000 state students eligible for aid under the Emergency Immigrant Education Assistance Program attended New York City schools. One in seven City public school pupils was eligible for the program.[7]

- New York City serves 108,331 students (11.1 percent of enrollment) in special education programs. The report found an over representation of Blacks and Hispanics in ungraded, self-contained special education classrooms.[8]

What resources were invested to provide for these children?

- New York City received $ 3,140[9] in state aid per pupil in 1991-1992 compared to the state average, $3,346 per pupil[10]. The average for all suburban districts was $3,033.[11]

- New York City spent substantially less than comparable districts in the downstate area, $7,495 per pupil, compared to median expenditures per pupil of $7,634 statewide and $ 11,362, the median expenditure in the downstate suburban areas surrounding the City.[12]

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- New York City's wealth under the formula is below average for the state. Its property value per pupil and income per pupil were below the state average throughout the decade. With the state average wealth ratio approximately at 1:00, New York City's combined wealth ratio (CWR) was 0.976 in 1991–92. [13]

What effect did this serious lack of resources have on educational outcomes?

- New York City had the largest number of uncertified teachers, the greatest percentage of inexperienced teachers and a median teacher salary level that was close to the median salary level for the state. While the City employed the highest percentage of teachers with more than a masters' degree, City schools with the largest minority enrollment had the fewest of these teachers. [14]

- New York City staff ratios show that it has substantially fewer teachers and professional staff per pupil than other districts. New York City's elementary classes averaged 5 more pupils – and secondary classes averaged 7 to 9 more students – than classes outside the Big five.

- New York City pupils had fewer computers to use than students elsewhere. They had less access to public and cable television and there were fewer library books per student in the City schools. The number of books per student in New York City, 9.5 was half the number in Rural (21), Suburban (20.6) and Other City Districts (18.2).[15]

- Almost uniformly, schools in New York City had the lowest level of performance on state administered tests.[16] New York City , "which, compared to other school categories, had relatively low expenditures per pupil, larger class sizes, larger percentages of uncertified teachers, and higher teacher turnover, as well as fewer technological resources and library books, was the least successful category on every measure."[17]

The disparities reflected in these data reveal the inequities in the use of resources and educational outcomes that are reported to the Governor and the Legislature in the Chapter 655 report. These disparities have grown over the last five years. According to the report, "Little was accomplished, however, in reducing the disparities among districts in expenditure per pupil, although changes in State aid legislation, if fully implemented, have the potential to do so."[18]

The report reiterates the state's commitment to two principles: that every child can learn and "Every child in New York State is entitled to the resources necessary to provide the sound, basic education which the State Constitution requires. The requirement is not equality of input but equity of outcomes." These statements represents a clear challenge to the legislature. Lawmakers in 1994 *can* achieve greater equity in the distribution of state aid. But to do so they must break through old patterns of political trade–offs and focus on the needs of children.

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1 The State Education Department, Fiscal Analysis and Services Unit, Albany, N.Y. *New York: the State of Learning*, a Report to the Governor and the Legislature on the Educational Status of the State's Schools: submitted February 1994.

2 *New York: the State of Learning*, Vol.I. p. xxiv.

3

4 Ibid.,Table 1.7 and 1.8 p.25.

5 Ibid., p. 13.

6 Ibid., p.xxv.

7 Ibid., p.xxv.

8 Ibid., pp 93–94.

[9] *Analysis of School Finances in New York State School Districts, 1991–92*. State Education Department, Fiscal Analysis and Services Unit. Albany, N.Y. November, 1993. Table 14, p.22. Pupil count is CAADM. No separate figure for NYC state aid appears in the 655 report.

[10] *New York: the State of Learning*, Table 3.2 p.42. The pupil measure used in this figure is CAADM,combined Adjusted Average Daily Membership.

[11] Ibid., p.35.

[12] Ibid., p.37.

[13] Ibid., Table 3.3., p.37.

[14] Ibid., p. xxviii.

[15] Ibid.,pp 82–87.

[16] Ibid., p.xxxi.

[17] Ibid., p.123.

[18] Ibid., p.40.

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TABLE 1
STATISTICS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS
FEBRUARY 1994 REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE LEGISLATURE

Location	Enrollment					Annual Attendance Rate	Dropouts and Youth at Risk				Graduates		Pupil Teacher Ratio
	Total	Percent White	Percent Black	Percent Hispanic	Percent Other		Census Poverty Index	Percent Free/ Reduced Lunch	LEP Rate	Dropout Rate	Percent Regents Diploma	Percent to College	
New York City	971,690	18.0%	37.3%	35.7%	9.0%	.868	30	79.2	15.3	.062	21	81.9	16.2
Large City Districts	122,733	36.6	46.1	14.5	2.8	.903	32	76.9	7.4	.072	20	70.9	14.0
Other City Districts	249,448	76.1	15.9	5.8	2.2	.939	17	45.3	2.6	.043	39	75.7	14.2
Suburban Districts	1,061,621	86.9	6.1	4.1	2.9	.950	6	18.9	2.0	.018	46	82.8	14.3
Rural Districts	232,253	95.1	1.9	1.5	1.5	.952	14	37.7	0.5	.025	41	70.3	13.7
Total State	2,637,745*	58.9*	20.0*	16.1*	5.0*	.916	18	48.8	7.1	.040	38	80.3	14.4

*Includes students enrolled in BOCES programs.

TABLE 2
STATISTICS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS
FEBRUARY 1994 REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE LEGISLATURE

Location	Classroom Teachers								Fiscal Data			% Distribution of Expenditures						
				Certification								Instruction						
	% Minority	Annual Turnover Percent	Median Salary	Percent Permanent	Percent Provisional	Percent Other	Median Years Exp.	Percent Master's +30 or Doctorate	Expend Per Pupil Unit	NYS Revn Shar	Combnd Wealth Ratio	Exclu Fr Bn	Fmg Bnft	Total	Cent Admn	Tran	Debt Serv	Misc
New York City	32.9	13	43,217	67.3	22.8	9.9	13	44.3	7,495	43.9	0.976	64.0	14.6	78.6	2.0	5.4	3.1	11.0
Large City Districts	17.8	8	55,797	76.9	17.4	5.7	17	22.7	8,483	56.1	0.710	60.6	15.0	75.6	1.3	6.4	3.3	13.5
Other City Districts	4.8	6	44,600	84.1	11.1	4.8	18	21.7	8,234	46.9	0.863	61.1	13.7	74.8	1.8	4.1	5.7	13.7
Suburban Districts	2.6	7	51,451	86.5	9.4	4.0	19	29.0	9,115	32.8	1.122	60.7	13.6	74.3	2.1	5.3	4.6	13.7
Rural Districts	0.9	7	37,119	81.2	13.4	5.3	16	11.4	7,169	58.1	0.548	59.2	12.7	71.9	2.7	5.7	7.0	12.7
Total State	13.9	8	44,999	77.8	15.3	6.9	17	30.7	8,241	40.9	0.998	61.7	14.0	75.7	2.0	5.3	4.3	12.7

*Percentages may not add to 100% because of rounding.

TABLE 3
STATISTICS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS
FEBRUARY 1994 REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE LEGISLATURE

Location	Pupil Evaluation Program % Above SRP					Program Evaluation Tests Mean Scores					PCT % Above SRP	
						Grade 4 Science						
						Objective Test		Manipu-lative Skills	Grade 6 Social Studies	Grade 8 Social Studies	Grade 8 Reading	Grade 8 Writing
	Grade 3 Reading	Grade 3 Math	Grade 5 Writing	Grade 6 Reading	Grade 6 Math	Content	Skills					
New York City	65	82	80	65	78	20	10	26	38	40	82.8	87.7
Large City Districts	75	92	89	74	88	21	10	30	40	43	86.9	88.7
Other City Districts	88	98	96	90	96	24	12	32	44	48	92.7	93.0
Suburban Districts	93	99	97	93	98	24	13	33	46	52	96.6	95.7
Rural Districts	90	99	95	92	97	24	12	33	45	51	96.3	93.9
Total Public	82	92	90	83	90	22	11	31	43	47	90.9	92.2

TABLE 4
STATISTICS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS
FEBRUARY 1994 REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE LEGISLATURE

Location	Regents Examinations											
	Comprehensive English			Global Studies			U.S. History/Government			Comprehensive French		
	% of Enroll Tested	% Passing	% of Avg Enr Passing	% of Enroll Tested	% Passing	% of Avg Enr Passing	% of Enroll Tested	% Passing	% of Avg Enr Passing	% of Enroll Tested	% Passing	% of Avg Enr Passing
New York City	28.3	68.2	19.3	40.1	65.4	26.2	21.1	71.1	15.0	4.6	93.1	4.3
Large City Districts	41.8	76.0	31.8	48.1	64.2	30.9	38.8	71.4	27.7	10.0	78.8	7.9
Other City Districts	54.8	88.2	48.4	62.7	79.9	50.1	53.6	87.1	46.7	14.1	91.6	12.9
Suburban Districts	64.1	91.0	58.4	72.1	85.7	61.8	64.4	89.9	57.9	15.7	94.7	14.9
Rural Districts	59.6	89.7	53.5	69.4	80.9	56.2	57.5	86.4	49.7	19.1	92.5	17.7
Total Public	49.6	85.6	42.4	59.0	79.1	46.7	46.8	85.7	40.1	11.8	93.3	11.0

TABLE 5
STATISTICS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS
FEBRUARY 1994 REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE LEGISLATURE

Location	Regents Examinations											
	Comprehensive Spanish			Sequential Math I			Sequential Math II			Sequential Math III		
	% of Enroll Tested	% Passing	% of Avg Enr Passing	% of Enroll Tested	% Passing	% of Avg Enr Passing	% of Enroll Tested	% Passing	% of Avg Enr Passing	% of Enroll Tested	% Passing	% of Avg Enr Passing
New York City	22.6	95.1	21.5	47.5	65.0	30.9	30.5	68.8	21.0	20.0	74.0	14.8
Large City Districts	24.5	81.6	20.0	60.8	52.5	31.9	40.3	53.3	21.5	25.4	66.6	16.9
Other City Districts	26.7	94.1	25.1	65.0	80.9	52.6	54.2	78.2	42.4	38.1	80.6	30.7
Suburban Districts	35.3	95.4	33.7	78.7	86.1	67.8	66.3	82.4	54.7	49.0	84.0	41.2
Rural Districts	25.4	95.5	24.2	77.4	82.1	63.6	60.3	79.0	47.7	40.5	80.7	32.7
Total Public	28.8	94.8	27.3	65.8	78.7	51.8	51.3	77.9	39.9	36.3	80.9	29.3

TABLE 6
STATISTICS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS
FEBRUARY 1994 REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE LEGISLATURE

Location	Regents Examinations											
	Earth Science			Biology			Chemistry			Physics		
	% of Enroll Tested	% Passing	% of Avg Enr Passing	% of Enroll Tested	% Passing	% of Avg Enr Passing	% of Enroll Tested	% Passing	% of Avg Enr Passing	% of Enroll Tested	% Passing	% of Avg Enr Passing
New York City	13.0	63.4	8.2	33.0	57.9	19.1	22.2	65.3	14.5	12.8	71.5	9.1
Large City Districts	33.7	51.6	17.4	37.7	59.8	22.5	23.7	61.2	14.5	14.9	65.7	9.8
Other City Districts	52.0	78.1	40.6	51.6	80.0	41.3	36.5	79.8	29.2	20.0	85.5	17.1
Suburban Districts	64.3	83.1	53.4	67.2	84.0	56.4	48.1	85.3	41.1	26.0	90.2	23.4
Rural Districts	66.9	78.0	52.2	62.7	80.9	50.7	40.5	82.2	33.3	20.7	89.2	18.5
Total Public	44.5	78.9	35.1	52.3	76.9	40.3	36.4	79.7	29.0	19.9	84.8	16.9